

Conference Abstract

# Integration and Curation of At-Risk Collections into the Scripps Institution of Oceanography Collections

Benjamin Frable<sup>‡</sup>, Charlotte Seid<sup>‡</sup>, Greg W Rouse<sup>‡</sup>, Philip A. Hastings<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>‡</sup> Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, United States of America

Corresponding author: Benjamin Frable ([bfrable@ucsd.edu](mailto:bfrable@ucsd.edu))

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## Abstract

The Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) at the University of California, San Diego maintains one of the largest combined oceanographic collections in the world comprising four collections: Geological (sediment cores and dredged rocks), Pelagic Invertebrates, Benthic Invertebrates and Marine Vertebrates. After surviving threats of dissolution, the SIO Collections are now securely funded and have been able to make other collections available to the scientific community. Over the last few years, both the Marine Vertebrate (SIO-MVC) and Benthic Invertebrate (SIO-BIC) Collections have received National Science Foundation (NSF) and institutional funding to integrate important at-risk collections from University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) and the University of Victoria. The UCLA Ichthyological Collection, around 9000 lots, was at risk of disposal due to hazardous material concerns and lack of institutional support. The collection, accumulated primarily under Boyd Walker (1949-1980) and later Don Buth (1980-), contains material from extensive surveys of the near-shore fishes of Southern California, Baja California and the Tropical Eastern Pacific including remote oceanic islands such as the Revillagigedos, Clipperton and the Galapagos. The UCLA collection also contains over 150 secondary types and over 100 species new to the SIO-MVC.

Due to lack of support, the collection records were never digitized and the collection was minimally curated and its holdings were poorly known. For over two years, the collection

manager and student employees have physically re-curated and integrated this material into the SIO-MVC. These data are now available online via iDigBio and VertNet and have already been used in numerous studies. The SIO-BIC, holding 45,000 lots, is accepting ownership of two deep-sea animal collections from Verena Tunnicliffe at the University of Victoria and Robert Vrijenhoek at MBARI. These collections include 10,900+ lots, largely from hydrothermal vents across the Pacific. Collected over 35 years from remote deep-sea sites that are difficult and expensive to access, these collections represent a major resource for systematics, genetics, and ecology. With Dr. Vrijenhoek now retired and Dr. Tunnicliffe nearing retirement, their collections were at risk of being lost. This material will be made discoverable online through the SIO-BIC database and iDigBio, and will be available for loan and examination. In the last year, the collection manager and five undergraduate employees have integrated some 3,000 lots. With support from the institution and the NSF, the SIO collections are solidifying their roles as central repositories for deep-sea and Eastern Pacific fauna.

## **Keywords**

Digitization, collection integration, Eastern Pacific, hydrothermal vents, modernization

## **Presenting author**

Benjamin Frale

## **Grant title**

NSF CSBR: Ownership Transfer: Incorporation of the orphaned UCLA Fish Collection into the Marine Vertebrate Collection, Scripps Institution of Oceanography

NSF CSBR: Ownership Transfer: Incorporation of MBARI and Univ. of Victoria deep-sea animal collections into the Benthic Invertebrate Collection at Scripps Institution of Oceanography